

XXXI. Notice respecting a Native British Rose, first described in RAY's Synopsis, as discovered by JAMES SHERARD. By JOSEPH SABINE, Esq., F.R.S. & L.S., &c.

Read June 21st, 1836.

IF the adding to the British Flora a new plant is a great delight to an English botanist, the finding and making out one, the existence of which has been long involved in doubt, is not less agreeable. The subject of the present communication is of the latter description.

In the Addenda, page 478, to the third edition of Ray's Synopsis of British Plants, published in 1724, is the following description of a native English Rose: "*Rosa sylvestris folio molliter hirsuto, fructu rotundo glabro, calyce et pediculo hispidis. Diversa species videtur a Rosa sylvestri fructu majore hispido* D. Dale (p. 454.) *ceu quæ vulgari propius accedit, in hac vero specie folia molli hirsutie pubescunt, fructus rotundus glaber est, verum calyces et pediculi crebris spinulis brevibus obsiti sunt. Ceterum fructus umbellatim nascitur, et calyx non decidit in hac specie: pediculi modice longi sunt.* Found by Mr. J. Sherard a little on this side Kingston by the Thames."

The Rose with which Sherard's plant is compared is thus described at page 454 of the work referred to: "*Rosa sylvestris fructu majore hispido. Wild Briar or Dogs Rose with large prickly Heps. In sepibus non infrequens a D. Dale observata. Calyx in hac specie non decidit postquam fructus maturuit quemadmodum in præcedente, sed ei pertinaciter adhæret.*" Hudson (*Flora Anglica*, edit. alt. p. 219,) has made this Rose the variety  $\beta$  of his *R. villosa*, very accurately distinguishing it. His *Rosa villosa*  $\alpha$ , which he refers to Ray's "*Rosa sylvestris pomifera major nostras*," in my opinion is the *Rosa villosa* of Woods\*, whilst the variety  $\beta$  belongs, as I conceive, to *Rosa tomentosa*

\* I am aware that Mr. Woods refers the "*Rosa sylvestris pomifera major nostras*" of Ray to his *Rosa tomentosa*; but though I venture, notwithstanding the great authority of my friend, to differ with him on this point, I do so with diffidence, for I must ever consider him as my best instructor on the subject of British Roses, and as the first botanist whose inquiries led to a good understanding of the genus.

of the same author. The former is very correctly stated by Hudson as growing in the North of England, whilst the latter he says grows plentifully about London. The experience of subsequent botanists has confirmed the correctness of these locations, for the *R. villosa* of Woods does not exist in the South of England, but his *R. tomentosa* grows not only in the South, but in one or other of its various forms is found in almost every part of Great Britain.

Sir James Smith in the second volume of his English Flora, which contains the genus *Rosa*, has united and made a distinct species of the varieties  $\epsilon$  and  $\eta$  of Woods's *Rosa tomentosa*, calling it *Rosa subglobosa*, and to this he refers Sherard's Rose, the description of which is extracted above from Ray. Sir James Smith at first had called the species *Rosa Sherardi*, but subsequently changed its designation.

It is not part of my present object to discuss the question, whether the above two plants described by Mr. Woods as varieties of *Rosa tomentosa* can with propriety be separated from that species, as is proposed in the English Flora; I will therefore only briefly state my doubts on the subject. I have not seen living plants of the variety  $\epsilon$ , but I suspect, from the different habitats given to it, that different plants have been confounded together as one. As regards the variety  $\eta$ , I once searched for and found that growing in the locality mentioned by Mr. Woods near Potter's Bar, and subsequently having cultivated it, can pronounce decidedly that it is referable only to *Rosa tomentosa* of Woods, of which it is a remarkable variety.

The description of Sherard's Rose certainly led to the supposition that it was a round smooth-fruited plant, having some affinity to the *Rosa villosa* of Hudson and Woods, but especially distinguishable from it by the shape of the hip. Being satisfied that nothing but an inspection of the actual plant would set the question respecting it at rest, I caused some years since a strict search to be made amongst the wild Roses in the vicinity of Kingston, and though by this I obtained some very curious plants, I got nothing at all resembling that I sought for. The discovery was reserved for myself.

Four or five years back I found several plants of a Rose belonging to Mr. Woods's setigerous section growing in a hedge a short distance from Kingston. The plants in the hedge were so ill treated and cut about, that I was disappointed in procuring flowers from them; none were produced. I

therefore removed some suckers into the garden of my friend Mr. Robert Jenkinson, at Norbiton in the neighbourhood, where they have blossomed in the present year. The plant turns out to be a variety of *Rosa Doniana*, exactly corresponding with that from Sussex, given by Mr. Borrer in the Supplement to English Botany, folio 2601, except that the fruit is smooth, though the calyx and peduncles are beset with small spines. It agrees exactly in every point with the description above quoted from Ray, and therefore I have no doubt that it is the Rose found by Sherard, and probably existing in the identical locality where he discovered it. This is in the hedge of the first field on the right side of the high road from London, in descending Kingston Hill, after passing the George Inn.

The description in Ray of this Rose is imperfect: had it been stated that the fruit was small as well as globose, and that the branches bore both setæ and aculei, there would have been little difficulty in assigning to it its proper place in the genus; and as in the time of Hudson, and indeed until a much later period, *Rosa spinosissima* was the only species of the setigerous section described by British botanists, it would probably have been referred to that. In the present day we have a transition of species from *R. spinosissima* through *R. rubella*, *R. involuta*, *R. Doniana*, and *R. Sabini*, all belonging to the setigerous Roses, and in the last species approaching to *R. tomentosa* of the next section, which contains the species having straight aculei but without setæ.